

**OUTLINE OF THE
PRINCIPLES OF
HISTORY (GRUNDRISS DER
HISTORIK)**

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Outline of the Principles of History (Grundriss der Historik) by Johann Gustav Droysen

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JOHANN GUSTAV DROYSEN

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OUTLINE
OF THE
PRINCIPLES OF HISTORY

(GRUNDRISS DER HISTORIK)

BY
JOHANN GUSTAV DROYSEN,

LATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF BERLIN.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

TRANSLATED BY
E. BENJAMIN ANDREWS,
PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I BECAME interested in Professor Droysen as an historian so early as 1882. In real grasp upon the nature and meaning of history he seemed to me the superior of Ranke. This view I have not changed. To assist myself in comprehending his very deep thoughts I soon began a translation of the *Historik*. At first I had no idea of publishing, but as the value of the little work impressed me more and more deeply, I at last determined to English it for others. I subsequently laid the matter before Droysen, receiving his approval in the genial letter which appears upon a preceding page. I expected to finish the work in a few months from the date of this letter, but more pressing labors came and became permanent, so commanding my time that I have never since been able to devote to the translation more than now and then an hour. At last, however, after so many years, it is completed, and I give it to the public, appendices and all. These greatly elucidate the "Outline" proper, and may very appropriately be read first. Those who know Droysen's cumbersome yet nervous and abbreviated style of writing will not estimate the extent of my toil by the number of pages in this book.

Such was my reverence for Droysen that, after his death in 1884, I cherished the hope of preparing a

brief biography of him. I relinquished this half-formed purpose partly for lack of time, and partly because several excellent sketches of him presently appeared. Max Duncker himself wrote two of these, one in Ivan Müller's Biographical Year-Book for the Knowledge of Antiquity, also published separately, and a more extended one in the Prussian Year-Book for August, 1884 (LIV, *Heft* 2), edited by von Treitschke and Delbrück. Duncker was Droysen's close friend, and had access to much helpful material in manuscript. I inclined to translate one of his pieces for use in this volume, but upon reflection thought the biography of Dr. Hermann Krüger likely to be more interesting to American readers. Professor G. Droysen, son of the author of the "Outline," considers Krüger's account on the whole better than aught else which was written upon his father's life and work. This biography first came out in the form of articles in the *Mecklenburg Anzeiger*, the last one appearing on Saturday, August 2, 1884. Krüger, too, was an intimate friend of Droysen's. I could not have hoped to write anything better than what these two competent and privileged biographers had presented. Besides, it was intimated to me that Professor G. Droysen would sometime publish a still ampler history of his distinguished father's life.

It is a reflection upon our times that such a man as Droysen should so soon even seem to be forgotten. I say this notwithstanding certain reasons for apathy toward him grounded in the nature and habits of the man. Owing to his intense application, and also to his simple honesty, forbidding in him those arts by which some German professors are popular, Droysen founded,

properly speaking, no school, though several of the German historians who earned fame during his last years and after his death were his pupils, inspired by his spirit and impressing upon their works the stamp of his manner. Among these may be mentioned Grünhagen, of Breslau, who has written so well on the first two Silesian Wars; Reinhold Koser, of Berlin, who has edited several volumes of the Political Correspondence of Frederick the Great; and S. Isaacsohn, author of the excellent *Geschichte des preussischen Beamtenthums*. Of these Koser is perhaps the ablest, though Grünhagen is famous for his fairness. In this he excels Droysen, who was often too controversial and always too favorable to Prussia. But not one of these younger historians so much as approaches the master in that wonderful wealth and control of materials exhibited by him in his *Geschichte der preussischen Politik*.

The "Outline" as it appears in English is in certain points somewhat more than a reflex of the original. In those paragraphs of Droysen's, and they are not few, which he so painfully abbreviated, leaving them hardly more than strings of catch-words for lecture-room amplification, the statements have been carefully pieced out into a fullness that will, it is hoped, give them clear meaning. For the Greek, Latin, French, and Italian with which the author loved to interlard his discourse, English has in most cases been substituted, the original being given either in brackets or in the margin. A few brief explanatory notes have been added at points where they seem most necessary.

I consider Droysen's *Historik* the weightiest book of its size composed in our century, weightier than any

other, small or great, save certain treatises by Hegel. Yet I know the present tendency of historical study too well to expect that all the English and American historical scholars will read this book who, in my judgment, would greatly profit by reading it. In most directions one finds a stronger zeal for the knowledge of history than for the understanding of history. We are so busy at gathering facts that no time is left us to reflect upon their deeper meanings. Too many who wish to be considered historians seem hardly less enthusiastic over the history of some town pump, provided it is "fresh" and "written from the sources," than over that of the rise of a constitution. Happily this fault is less pronounced than it was. With increasing clearness is it seen that history is rationally interesting only as man's life is interesting, and that, touching man's life, the element in which one may most legitimately feel deep interest is its moral evolution. This is emphatically Droysen's view, and in the "Outline" he sets it forth in a more inspiring and convincing manner than is done by any other writer whom it has been my privilege to read. May this translation enable many to derive from his profound conceptions even more profit than they have brought me.

BROWN UNIVERSITY,
September 6, 1892.

E. BENJ. ANDREWS.